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ABSTRACT

The learning module described is for the use of special education or regular classroom elementary teachers who have children with attention problems. The primary focus of the module is upon a behavior modification approach to increase teacher skill in promoting attention in the exceptional child classroom. Included in the description of this product is an outline of topics covered and activities and resources involved in using the product. Ordering information on needed materials is provided as well as a critique of the module. (JD)

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DESCRIPTION OF TEACHER IN-SERVICE EDUCATION MATERIALS

A. SUMMARY INFORMATION

Title: EDUCOURSE I - ATTENDING BEHAVIOR: Skills for Teaching Exceptional Children

Publication Date(s): Copyright 1972

Intended Users: Special education (or regular classroom) teachers who have children with attending problems

Grade Level(s): Elementary grades

Number: Group or individual (3-5 teachers per site is preferred)

Primary Focus: A behavior modification approach to increase teacher skill in promoting attention in the exceptional child classroom is the major focus of the product.

School subject(s) and/or in-service topic(s) covered:

Develop teacher skill in using positive reinforcement techniques to increase attending behavior in exceptional children. Course emphasizes acquiring information about and practicing skills such as assessing behavior, modifying behavior with teacher-attention and implementing a reinforcement system to a small number of children.

What participant does in using the materials:

Teachers read about several specific skills in the Handbook, view a model videotape, and then practice the skills in two short videotaped or audiotaped lessons. Teachers evaluate their own progress with forms supplied in the Handbook.

Resources:

Materials include a 173 pp. Handbook for teachers and 5 1/2" instructional videotapes. Described as self-instructional, the course does not require an instructor; a coordinator is necessary to facilitate operation. The course takes 6 weeks to complete, with 4-6 hours of work (in and out-of-school) per week. Each needs 8-10 hours of released time for course activities. Each site needs videotape and audiotape recording and playback equipment.

Describer critique:

A tedious and repetitive set of materials that does not provide the teacher with the information or support necessary to practice the behavior modification techniques successfully. Videotapes are disastrous. Reading selected Handbook materials (Sequences 3 and 4) might be helpful.

(SE) - (M) - behavioral science (child development) TD

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B. IN-DEPTH INFORMATION

Title: EDUCOURSE I - ATTENDING BEHAVIOR: Skills for Teaching Exceptional Children

Publication Date(s): Copyright 1972

Intended Users: Special Education (or regular classroom) teachers who have children with attending problems

Grade Level(s): Elementary grades

Number: Group or individual (3-5 teachers per site is preferred)

Primary Focus: A behavior modification approach to increase teacher skill in promoting attention in the exceptional child classroom is the main focus.

1.0 PURPOSES:

The Teacher's Handbook states: "Educourse One represents a behavior modification approach to promoting attention in the exceptional child classroom. The objective of the course is to develop teacher skills which will: (1) reduce the occurrence of behaviors which interfere with attention, and (2) elicit and maintain attending behavior."

As a rationale for the course content, the Handbook states that observations and research "suggest that it is the exceptional child's failure to master the basic learning competency of attending that constitutes the most serious instructional problem for his teacher...The methodology proposed in the course is derived from the premise that behavior is learned,...and an understanding of (basic behavior modification) principles is essential to the effective application of the instructional techniques in Educourse One." Positive reinforcement is emphasized as a consequence for student attending behavior.

Each instructional sequence specifies objectives in the form of teacher skills, competencies, and products. For example, the Handbook states that "the objective of Instructional Sequence One is the development of observational skills for assessing student attending problems. At the completion of this sequence, the teacher will have acquired information essential to the planning of effective behavior modification strategies in her classroom, and will have practiced data collection skills necessary to an assessment of these strategies. Product: Base-Rate for Interfering Behavior."

2.0 CONTENT — Scope and Sequencing of Topics:

The Handbook states that teachers are expected to acquire specific teaching skills as follows:

Sequence I: Assessing Interfering Behaviors. 1) recognize interfering behaviors, 2) establish a base-rate, 3) identify reinforcing outcomes.

Sequence II: Eliciting Attending Behaviors. 1) discuss attending behavior, 2) elicit student examples, 3) establish rules for attending behavior.

Sequence III: Using Teacher-attention to Modify Behavior. 1) use approval responses, 2) relate approval to specific student responses, 3) redistribute teacher-attention.

Sequence IV: Devising and Implementing a Reinforcement System. 1) develop a reinforcement strategy, 2) establish contingencies, 3) enforce contingencies.

The four accompanying model videotapes present these specific skills through verbal description, visual presentation and modeling of desired teacher behaviors in typical classroom situations.

Course materials are intended to be used in the sequence outlined above. Although there is a pre-course teacher assessment, it is not clear whether teachers can choose to do all or only some of the instructional sequences Course is primarily self-instructional, but a coordinator/resource person is required to facilitate operation.

3.0 ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCES INVOLVED IN USE OF PRODUCT

3.1 Description of main in-service activities:

With slight variation among the four instructional sequences, course activities involve a pattern of reading about three related skills in the Handbook, viewing a demonstration film, planning and conducting two videotape or audiotaped lessons in which the skills are used, and evaluating skill performance on Handbook forms. Teachers use their own students in practice lessons. Except for possible group viewing of films, teachers complete these activities independently and individually.

3.2 Help given in use of product:

The Teacher's Handbook (173 pp. printed, soft cover) provides a sequential list of course activities and gives detailed instructions for planning and evaluating skill performance. Each teacher should have a Handbook. There are four model videotapes and one introductory videotape. Each videotape is about a half hour in length.

4.0 EVALUATION OF TEACHER INSERVICE LEARNING

The teacher and a resource person evaluate the attending behaviors of a group of children in a pre- and post-course videotape (or observation) of a typical 15-minute instructional activity. If no more than 10 interfering behaviors (in 5 categories) are recorded on the pre-tape, the teacher does not need the course. If the post-tape does not show a significant decrease in interfering behaviors, the teacher can retake all or appropriate parts of the training cycle.

Evaluation and assessment is built into each demonstration film and videotaped lesson. Teachers evaluate their own performance by completing brief self-evaluation forms included in the Handbook.

5.0 ORDERING INFORMATION

5.1 Resources required/recommended:

This is intended for use with a videotape and audiotape recording system. Appropriate equipment is required. Each teacher needs about 8-10 hours of release time to complete observation, videotaping, audiotaping, and interview activities. It is estimated that total time involved is 4-6 hours per week, for 6 weeks. A coordinator/resource person is necessary to help teachers assess pre-post tapes and facilitate course operation.

5.2 Distributor name/address:

Curricula Improvement Center
1300 Cooper Street
Punta Gorda, Florida 33950
(813) 639-3862

5.3 Components/approximate costs:

Component	Purchase	Rental	No. Req.	Reusable
Teacher's Handbook	$2.00 (approx.)	No	1 per teacher	no**
Five instructional videoaptes	contact developer*	?	1 set per site	yes

* Developer has only a limited number of videotapes available. No suggested price.

** The bulk of the Handbook is reuseable; however, the lesson plans, film exercises, and self-evaluation forms are consumable. Purchase of additional Handbooks could be avoided if these forms were duplicated for use by each teacher.

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6.0 HISTORY OF DEVELOPMENT

6.1 Identification of the developer:

This is a product of the Curricula Improvement Center, a multi-county educational cooperative: Carl E. Hornsby and Doris Bridgeforth were in charge of product development.

6.2 How developed and when:

The program was developed through a grant awarded by the Florida State Department of Education under the provisions of Public Law 91230, Title VI, Part B prior to 1972. Feedback from a preliminary field-test and main field-test (both in 1971) contributed to a major revision of the Teacher Handbook and several revisions of the model lesson videotapes. Three regular classroom teachers in De Soto County and 2 EMR teachers from Lee & Pinellas Counties participated in the first field-test; 16 EMR teachers took part in the main field-test and were from three other Florida communities.

6.3 Evidence of effectiveness with users:

Field-test teachers indicated to the staff that they were experiencing some difficulty in properly identifying the examples of skills shown in the video-taped model lessons. As a result of these and other data (involving responses from an additional 20 special education teachers), instructions for the micro-teach lessons were revised. The sequence and number of skills were eventually reorganized.

The principal criticisms of the Handbook were that it was too long and detailed and had over-lapping content. Consequently, skills contained in original sequences were combined and the Handbook was re-written to include an introduction and only from instructional sequences.

C. DESCRIBER CRITIQUE

Appropriateness / adaptability / technical quality:

The skills described in the course are appropriate for elementary teachers and students in exceptional and regular classrooms. However, the Handbook activities and video models are repetitious and often belabor the obvious. The instructional videotapes are particularly poor in visual interest and technical quality: the narrator's lectures are interspersed with old-fashioned drawings and short, stilted teacher/student dialogue taken out of context. Sequences 3 and 4 in the Handbook might be useful if used with support from a resource person experienced in behavior modification techniques.

Content accuracy/social fairness/community acceptance issues:

Children shown on videotape seem to be regular students to minimal behavior problems. There is a distressing emphasis on increasing docile, in-seat behavior in students.

Overall summary/comment:

A tedious and repetitive set of materials that does not provide the teacher with the information or support necessary to practice the behavior modification techniques successfully. Videotapes are disastrous. Reading selected Handbook material (Sequences 3 and 4) might be helpful.